



First World War Centenary

WW1 Victoria Cross
Recipients from Overseas



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Office



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Foreword

The Prime Minister, Rt Hon David Cameron MP

The centenary of the First World War will be a truly national moment – a time when we will remember a generation that sacrificed so much for us.

Those brave men and boys were not all British. Millions of Australians, Indians, South Africans, Canadians and others joined up and fought with Britain, helping to secure the freedom we enjoy today.

It is our duty to remember them all. That is why this programme to honour the overseas winners of the Victoria Cross is so important. Every single name on these plaques represents a story of gallantry, embodying the values of courage, loyalty and compassion that we still hold so dear. By putting these memorials on display in these heroes' home countries, we are sending out a clear message: that their sacrifice – and their bravery – will never be forgotten.



Foreword

FCO Senior Minister of State, Rt Hon Baroness Warsi

I am delighted to be leading the commemorations of overseas Victoria Cross recipients from the First World War.

It is important to remember this was a truly global war, one which pulled in people from every corner of the earth. Sacrifices were made not only by people in the United Kingdom but by many millions across the world: whether it was the large proportion of Australian men who volunteered to fight in a war far from home, the 1.2 million Indian troops who took part in the war, or the essential support which came from the islands of the West Indies. It is truly inspiring that so many countries came together 100 years ago to uphold our way of life. This was a war which saw extraordinary courage and sacrifice from an entire generation.

This year, we are marking our gratitude to 175 men from 11 countries who demonstrated the utmost bravery “in the face of the enemy” during the First World War. These extraordinary men were awarded the Victoria Cross, Britain’s highest award for valour for their actions during the War. We shall honour them by engraving their names on bronze memorial plaques, to be presented to their home countries, sending out a powerful message that people of all backgrounds and faiths can unite in the name of a common cause.



We intend that these plaques will be displayed in prominent public areas in the VC recipients’ home countries and hope that the VC heroes’ stories will become better known. I am determined that we ensure that people of all backgrounds, and of all generations learn about the courage and heroism of their forefathers a hundred years ago.

WW1 Overseas VC Awards



Footnotes:

1. Denmark was neutral during the First World War
2. Total troop figure includes India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.
3. Ukraine was part of both the Russian and the Austro-Hungarian Empires.
4. One USA VC was awarded to the 'Unknown Soldier'

WW1 Overseas VC Commemorative Plaques



Australia



Belgium



Canada



Denmark



From the people of the United Kingdom
in honour of those men from India

Risaldar Badlu Singh
Sepoy Chatta Singh
Naik Darwan Singh Negi
Rifleman Gabar Singh Negi
Lance-Daffadar Gobind Singh
Lance-Naik Lala

who were awarded the Victoria Cross,
Britain's highest award for gallantry,
during the First World War

India



From the people of the
United Kingdom in honour of

Rifleman Karanbahadur Rana
Lance Naik Kulbir Thapa

who were awarded the Victoria Cross,
Britain's highest award for gallantry,
during the First World War

Nepal



From the people of the United Kingdom
in honour of those men from New Zealand

Cpl Leslie Andrew	Sgt Reginald Judson
Cpl Cyril Bassett	Sgt Henry Laurent
Sgt Donald Brown	Pte Henry Nicholas
Pte Thomas Cooke	Lt William Sanders
Pte James Crichton	Capt Alfred Shout
Sgt Samuel Forsyth	Lt Percy Storkey
LCpl Samuel Frickleton	Sgt Richard Travis
Sgt John Grant	Cpl Lawrence Weathers

who were awarded the Victoria Cross,
Britain's highest award for gallantry,
during the First World War

New Zealand



From the people of the
United Kingdom in honour of

Sepoy Khudadad Khan
Jemadar Mir Dast
Naik Shahamad Khan

who were awarded the Victoria Cross,
Britain's highest award for gallantry,
during the First World War

Pakistan



From the people of the United Kingdom
in honour of those men from South Africa

Capt William Bloomfield	A/Capt Reginald Hayward
Capt Andrew Beauchamp Proctor	L/Cpl William Hewitt
Sgt Frederick Booth	A/Capt Arthur Lascelles
Pte William Faulds	Capt Oswald Reid
T/Lt Robert Gorle	A/Capt Clement Robertson
A/Lt Col Henry Greenwood	A/Lt Col John Sherwood-Kelly
Capt Percy Hansen	A/Lt Col Richard West

who were awarded the Victoria Cross,
Britain's highest award for gallantry,
during the First World War

South Africa



From the people of the
United Kingdom in honour of

Corporal Filip Konowal

who was awarded the Victoria Cross,
Britain's highest award for gallantry,
during the First World War

Ukraine



From the people of the United Kingdom
in honour of those men from the
United States of America

The Unknown Soldier
Captain Bellenden Hutcheson
Sergeant George Mullin
Sergeant Raphael Zengel
Lance Corporal William Metcalf

who were awarded the Victoria Cross,
Britain's highest award for gallantry,
during the First World War

United States of America

WW1 Victoria Cross Award Profiles



Shahamad Khan

The Tigris Front, Mesopotamia
(now Iraq)



Shahamad Khan was a Punjabi Muslim who was born in 1879 in Rawalpindi (now part of Pakistan). He served as a naik (the equivalent to a corporal) in the 89th Punjabis of the British Indian Army during the First World War.

Khan was awarded the Victoria Cross for most conspicuous bravery in Mesopotamia (now present-day Iraq) on 12-13 April 1916. He was in charge of a machine gun covering a gap in the line very close to the enemy's trench. His citation states: "He beat off three counter attacks and worked his gun single-handed after all his men, except two belt-fillers, had become casualties.

For three hours he held the gap under very heavy fire while it was being made secure. When his gun was knocked out by hostile fire he and his two belt-fillers held their ground with rifles till ordered to withdraw. With three men sent to assist him he then brought back his gun, ammunition, and one severely wounded man unable to walk. Finally, he himself returned and removed all remaining arms and equipment except two shovels. But for his great gallantry and determination our line must have been penetrated by the enemy."

Lala

Hanna, Mesopotamia (now Iraq)



Lala was born in 1876 in Himachal Pradesh, India, and served as a lance-naik (lance corporal) in the 41st Dogras, Indian Army, during World War One. He was awarded the Victoria Cross for most conspicuous bravery on 21 January 1916 during the First Battle of Hanna in Mesopotamia.

His citation reads: "*Finding a British officer of another regiment lying close to the enemy, he dragged him into a temporary shelter, which he himself had made, and in which he had already bandaged four wounded men. After bandaging his wounds he heard calls from the Adjutant of his own regiment who was lying in the open severely wounded. The enemy were not more than one hundred yards distant, and it seemed certain death to go out in that direction, but Lance Naik Lala insisted on going out to his adjutant, and offered to crawl back with him on his back at once. When this was not permitted, he stripped off his own clothing to keep the wounded officer warmer, and stayed with him till just before dark, when he returned to the shelter.*

After dark he carried the first wounded officer back to the main trenches, and then, returning with a stretcher, carried back his Adjutant. He set a magnificent example of courage and devotion to his officers."

Lala died in India of polio in 1927, and his last words were said to be: "We fought true."

Bellenden Hutcheson

Drocourt-Quéant Line, France



Bellenden Hutcheson was born in Mount Carmel in the United States in 1883. He graduated from medical school and spent several years practising as a doctor in the American West. After the outbreak of World War One, Hutcheson joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force as a medical officer.

Captain Hutcheson was awarded his Victoria Cross for his bravery and devotion to duty on 2 September 1918 on the Drocourt-Quéant Line near Cagnicourt, France. His citation reads: *“Without hesitation and with utter disregard of personal safety he remained on the field until every wounded man had been attended to. He dressed the wounds of a seriously wounded officer under terrific machine-gun and shell fire, and, with the assistance of prisoners and of his own men, succeeded in evacuating him to safety, despite the fact that the bearer party suffered heavy casualties.*

Immediately afterwards he rushed forward, in full view of the enemy, under heavy machine-gun and rifle fire, to tend a wounded sergeant, and, having placed him in a shell-hole, dressed his wounds. Captain Hutcheson performed many similar gallant acts, and, by his coolness and devotion to duty, many lives were saved.”

Thain MacDowell

Vimy Ridge, France



Thain Wendell MacDowell was born in 1890 in Quebec, Canada. After graduating from university, he enlisted and served with the 38th Infantry Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. In 1916, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order for his actions during the Battle of the Somme.

Captain MacDowell was one of four Canadians awarded the Victoria Cross during the attack on Vimy Ridge in France on 9 April 1917.

His citation reads: *“For most conspicuous bravery and indomitable resolution in face of heavy machine gun and shell fire.*

By his initiative and courage this officer, with the assistance of two runners, was enabled in the face of great difficulties, to capture two machine guns, besides two officers and seventy-five men. Although wounded in the hand, he continued for five days to hold the position gained, in spite of heavy shell fire, until eventually relieved by his battalion.

By his bravery and prompt action he undoubtedly succeeded in rounding up a very strong enemy machine post.”

Henry Nicholas

Polderhoek, Belgium



Henry Nicholas was born in 1891 in Lincoln, New Zealand. He worked as a carpenter before enlisting in 1916, and three months later he joined the New Zealand Expeditionary Force in France as a private with the 1st Battalion of the Canterbury Regiment.

Private Nicholas was awarded his Victoria Cross in an attack on Polderhoek Chateau in Belgium on 3 December 1917. His citation reads: *"Private Nicholas, who was one of a Lewis gun section, had orders to form a defensive flank to the right of the advance, which was checked by heavy machine-gun and rifle fire from an enemy strong-point. Whereupon, followed by the remainder of his section at an interval of about 25 yards, Private Nicholas rushed forward alone, shot the officer in command of the strong-point, and overcame the remainder of the garrison of sixteen with bombs and bayonets, capturing four wounded prisoners and a machine-gun. He captured this strong-point practically single-handed, and thereby saved many casualties. Subsequently, when the advance reached its limit, Private Nicholas collected ammunition under heavy machine-gun and rifle fire. His exceptional valour and coolness throughout the operations afforded an inspiring example to all."*

Nicholas was presented with his VC by King George V at Buckingham Palace. He was killed in action just three weeks before the end of the war.

Alexander Burton

Lone Pine, Gallipoli



Alexander Stewart Burton was working as an ironmonger when he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force and joined the 7th Battalion. He was one of three Australian soldiers awarded the Victoria Cross for a particular act of bravery during the fighting against the Turks at Lone Pine, Gallipoli, which saw his death on 9 August 1915 aged 22.

His citation reads: *"In the early morning of 9th August the enemy made a determined counter-attack on a newly-captured trench held by Lieutenant Tubb, Corporals Burton, Dunstan and a few men. They advanced up a trench and blew in a sandbag barricade, but Tubb and the two corporals repulsed the enemy and rebuilt the barricade. Strong enemy bombing parties twice again succeeded in blowing in the barricade, but on each occasion the enemy were repulsed and the barricade rebuilt, although Tubb was wounded and Corporal Burton killed while most gallantly building up the parapet under a hail of bombs."*

Burton has no known grave, but his name is commemorated on the Lone Pine Memorial at Gallipoli.

Sir Adrian Carton de Wiart

La Boisselle, France



Sir Adrian Carton de Wiart was born in 1880 in Brussels and was of Belgian and Irish descent. In the First World War, Carton de Wiart served with the British Army, and in early 1915 he was moved to the Western Front where he commanded three infantry battalions and a brigade during the war.

Carton de Wiart was awarded the Victoria Cross during the fierce fighting at La Boisselle on 2-3 July 1916 during the Battle of the Somme. His citation states: *"For most conspicuous bravery, coolness and determination during severe operations of a prolonged nature. It was owing in a great measure to his dauntless courage and inspiring example that a serious reverse was averted."*

He displayed the utmost energy and courage in forcing our attack home. After three other battalion Commanders had become casualties, he controlled their commands, and ensured that the ground won was maintained at all costs. He frequently exposed himself in the organisation of positions and of supplies, passing unflinchingly through fire barrage of the most intense nature.

His gallantry was inspiring to all."

Thomas Dinesen

Parvillers, France



Thomas Dinesen was born in Rungsted, Denmark in 1892. During the First World War, he tried unsuccessfully to join the French, British and American armies. Eventually, he was able to enlist in the Royal Highlanders of Canada.

Private Dinesen was awarded his Victoria Cross for his bravery on 12 August 1918 at the start of the Battle of Amiens, where his actions helped to capture over a mile of heavily-defended German trenches during a 10 hour period. His citation explains: *"Five times in succession he rushed forward alone, and single-handed put hostile machine guns out of action, accounting for twelve of the enemy with bomb and bayonet. His sustained valour and resourcefulness inspired his comrades at a very critical stage of the action, and were an example to all."*

Dinesen died in Denmark in 1979.

Kulbir Thapa
Fauquissart, France



Born in Palpa, Nepal in 1889, Kulbir Thapa was a rifleman in the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Gurkha Rifles of the Indian Army and was the first Nepalese recipient of the Victoria Cross.

Thapa won his Victoria Cross for his bravery on 25-26 September 1915 at Fauquissart in France, where he found himself stranded on the German side of the line during an attack. His citation reads: *“When himself wounded on September 25, 1915, he found a badly wounded soldier of the 2nd Battalion, the Leicestershire Regiment behind the first-line German trench and although urged by the British soldier to save himself he remained with him all day and night.*

In the early morning of September 26, in misty weather, he brought him out through the German wire and, leaving him in a place of comparative safety, returned and brought in two wounded Gurkhas one after the other. He then went back in broad daylight for the British soldier and brought him in also, carrying him most of the way and being at most points under the enemy’s fire.”

He was personally awarded his Victoria Cross by King George V at Buckingham Palace and is still remembered by the Royal Leicestershire Regiment at their regimental museum.

William Frederick Faulds
Delville Wood, France



William Faulds was the first South African-born man serving with South African forces to be awarded the Victoria Cross in the First World War. He was born in 1895 in the Eastern Cape and served in the 1st Battalion (Cape) of the South African Infantry Brigade.

Private Faulds was awarded the Victoria Cross for most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty on 18-20 July 1916 at Delville Wood, where South African troops suffered appalling casualties, during the Battle of the Somme.

His citation reads: *“A bombing party under Lieut Craig attempted to rush over 40 yards (37 m) of ground which lay between the British and enemy trenches. Coming under very heavy rifle and machine gun fire the officer and the majority of the party were killed and wounded. Unable to move, Lieut Craig lay midway between the two lines of trench, the ground being quite open. In full daylight, Pte Faulds, accompanied by two other men, climbed over the parapet, ran out, picked up the officer, and carried him back... Two days later Private Faulds again showed most conspicuous bravery in going out alone to bring in a wounded man, and carried him nearly half a mile to a dressing-station... The artillery fire was at the time so intense that stretcher-bearers and others considered that any attempt to bring in the wounded man meant certain death.”*

During his military career, Faulds was awarded 11 medals including the Military Cross in 1918. He died in 1950 and is buried in Harare, Zimbabwe.

Filip Konowal

Hill 70, near Lens, France



Filip Konowal was born in present-day Ukraine but emigrated to Canada around 1913. He enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force where he served with the 47th Infantry Battalion.

Konowal was a corporal when he won his Victoria Cross for his actions on 22-24 August 1917 when leading his section against German resistance on Hill 70, near Lens in France. As his citation explains: *"His section had the difficult task of mopping up cellars, craters and machine-gun emplacements. Under his able direction all resistance was overcome successfully, and heavy casualties inflicted on the enemy. In one cellar he himself bayoneted three enemy and attacked single-handed seven others in a crater, killing them all. On reaching the objective, a machine-gun was holding up the right flank, causing many casualties. Cpl. Konowal rushed forward and entered the emplacement, killed the crew, and brought the gun back to our lines.*

The next day he again attacked single-handed another machine-gun emplacement, killed three of the crew, and destroyed the gun and emplacement with explosives. This non-commissioned officer alone killed at least sixteen of the enemy, and during the two days' actual fighting carried on continuously his good work until severely wounded."

Konowal was personally presented with his Victoria Cross by King George V.



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